

Name: **Willow Reservoir Central WY-030-15N94W6-2012**

FORM 1

Documentation of BLM Wilderness Inventory Findings on Record

1. Is there existing BLM wilderness inventory information on all or part of this area?

No X Yes _____ (if yes, and if more than one area is within the area, list the names of those areas):

a) Inventory Source: _____

b) Inventory Area Name(s)/Number(s): _____

c) Map Name(s)/Number(s): _____

d) BLM District (s)/Field Office(s): _____

2. BLM Inventory Finds on Record:

Existing inventory information regarding wilderness characteristics (if more than one BLM inventory area is associated with the area, list each area and answer each question individually for each inventory area):

Inventory Source:

FORM 2

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

a. Area Number/Name **Willow Reservoir Central WY-030-15N94W6-2012** Acreage
12934.62

(1) Is the area of sufficient size?

Yes X No

Describe the boundaries of the area (roads, property lines, etc.). If the area meets one of the exceptions to the size criterion, check "Yes" and describe the exception. If more than one inventory area is involved, list the acres in each and evaluate each area/sub-area separately. In completing steps (1) – (5), use additional space as necessary.

The unit is bound on the north by BLM Road 3319, a.k.a. Adobe Town Road as well as a 50 foot wide pipeline disturbance. The unit is bound on the northeast by BLM Road 3317, a.k.a. Windmill Draw Road. The unit is bound on the east by the CIG Natural Gas Pipelines Designated Right-of-Way Corridor (Rawlins Resource Management Plan, Appendix 34). The unit is bound on the south by a Class 3 Light Duty Road of aggregate surface maintained by industry. The unit is bound on the southwest and west by a series of Class 3 Light Duty Roads of aggregate surface maintained by industry and a 50 foot wide pipeline disturbance with Rawlins Field Office right-of-way numbers WYW-117013, WYW-124747, WYW-159408, WYW-164058, WYW-143562, and WYW-146572.

DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS: (Include acreage, land ownership, location, topography, vegetation and summary of the major human uses/activities)

The Willow Reservoir Central area under consideration is 12,934.62 acres of BLM public land. It is located within the following townships: 6th P.M., T. 15 N., R 94 W., Sections 3-11 and 15-22; T. 16 N., R. 94 W., Sections 29-33; T. 15 N., R. 95 W., Sections 1-3 and 11-12; T. 16 N., R. 95 W., Sections 22-28 and 33-35. There is one 640 acre inholding owned by the State of Wyoming in T. 16 N., R. 95 W., Section 36. The terrain consists mainly of drainages created by Shallow Creek, The East Branch of Willow Creek, and Windmill Draw. The elevation ranges from 7,125 feet near the south end of the unit, above Windmill Draw, to 6,670 feet where Shallow Creek flows out of the unit in T. 16 N., R. 95 W., Section 34. The dominant vegetation cover is sagebrush-grassland. The primary land uses are for oil & gas exploration and livestock grazing. There is one range improvement in the area, a dam creating a medium sized reservoir on Windmill Draw in T. 15 N., R. 94 W., Section 4. There are 10 natural gas well pads within the unit, mostly in T. 16 N., R. 95 W. There are three long natural gas well access roads, maintained by mechanized equipment, within the unit. Two are in T. 16 N., R. 95 W., Sections 26-27 and 34-35, and one in T. 15 N., R. 94 W., Sections 6-7. There is one abandoned well pad in T. 15 N., R. 94 W., Section 8 that has been recently reclaimed and is fenced to protect reclaimed areas. In addition, the pipeline which served the well was stubbed above ground and a

short riser is still present. The area also contains a number of unimproved two-track trails accessible only by 4wd vehicles. The primary, dispersed recreational activities in the area are hunting and hiking.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A ☐

Description: The 17.31 miles of primitive routes (i.e., unimproved roads and two-track trails) and 10.4 miles of wilderness inventory roads (i.e., well access roads) detract from the unit's naturalness. Examples of these primitive routes and wilderness inventory roads are demonstrated in the large-scale aerial photo. When hiking across the Willow Reservoir Central Unit, the casual observer cannot escape the constant view of primitive routes. These primitive routes create noticeable linear intrusions and disturbances that interrupt the experience of any wilderness character briefly encountered in areas untrammelled by the works of man.

The area contains 23 oil and gas wells throughout the Willow Reservoir Central Unit (see locations in the large-scale aerial photo). These oil and gas installations within the unit represent permanent improvements and loss of primeval character. When examining the status of the oil and gas wells, six wells have expired permits, 10 wells are flowing, one well has ND status, one well has been denied/cancelled, and five have been permanently abandoned. Despite the variation in status, these wells remain as existing installations that detract from the naturalness and are substantially noticeable to the casual observer while hiking through the unit. All wells, which are not abandoned, are managed as active wells and receive commercial vehicle traffic for periodic maintenance. This traffic would interrupt the casual observer's experience of wilderness character due to road dust plumes and the contrast between the white coloration of these vehicles moving across the tan, brown, and olive landscape. Well pads do not receive final reclamation approval until they have been plugged and abandoned. Visual contrasts created by surface disturbances, including well pad turn-arounds, soil exposure around the facilities, and a rectangular area of wheat grass, remain until final reclamation is established.

The Willow Reservoir Central Unit also contains seven man-made reservoirs (see locations in the large-scale aerial photo). When the casual observer encounters these man-made borrow pits and impounded reservoirs, the linear and textual contrast on the landscape attracts the attention of the observer to these modifications constructed with mechanized equipment.

The casual observer is often attracted to bodies of water while hiking. Water adds interest and diversity to the landscape. When arriving at any of the seven reservoirs, the casual observer would notice that it is not a natural lake and that they have encountered an impounded, muddy borrow pit. The hiker seeking refreshment from clean water, would quickly notice that this "reservoir" is designed for cattle operations where the water is unfit for human consumption or swimming. The numerous range improvements, including seven reservoirs and one water well, were constructed, primarily, for commercial grazing operations. These improvements give the casual observer a perception that they are visitors to a cattle range rather than a wilderness untrammelled by the works of man. While the presence of cattle is compatible with a natural

landscape for wilderness inventory purposes, the noticeable presence of numerous grazing-related developments in this unit is not.

In sum, the cumulative impacts on naturalness including the numerous oil and gas wells, primitive routes and wilderness inventory roads, and permanent range improvements have impaired the naturalness in the Willow Reservoir Central Unit to a level that is incompatible with the definitions of wilderness provided in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 (incorporated in FLPMA 1976):

A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

(3) Does the area or the remainder of the area (if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

Description:

(4) Does the area or the remainder of the area (if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

Description: Naturalness requirement not met.

(5) Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational scenic or historical value)?

Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☒

Description: Naturalness requirement not met.

Summary of Analysis

Area Name and/or Number: Willow Reservoir Central WY-030-15N94W6-2012

Summary

Results of analysis:

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? ☒ Yes ☐ No
2. Does the area appear to be natural? ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A
3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities of solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A
4. Does the area have supplemental values? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A

Check one:

_____ The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as Land with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC).

___X___ The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

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